

they should find all they need to upset some of the fallacies that form the basis of many of their proposed remedies for the regeneration of mankind.

A work like the present has long been needed, but there are few who would have had the courage to undertake its preparation, and certainly no one could have achieved a more conspicuous success in the fulfilment of so onerous a task.

W. P. P.

*A Book of Birds.* By W. P. PYCRAFT, A.L.S., F.Z.S. With 30 full-page coloured Plates and many Illustrations in the Text. London: Sidney Appleton, 1908. Sm. 4to. Pp. viii, 155. (6s. net.)

THIS is the third volume of Sidney Appleton's 'Popular Natural History Books,' of which two volumes on British Flowering Plants and on Mammals of the World, both by W. F. Kirby, have appeared; and a volume on Minerals, by Leonard J. Spencer, is promised shortly.

Mr. Pycraft is well known as an authority on the anatomy and structure of birds, and has given us in his introductory chapter of 27 pages a very useful outline of this branch of the subject, with numerous illustrations. The remaining 16 chapters contain a popular account of the more interesting groups of birds, with special reference to the species figured. The coloured plates represent from four to eleven species each, and most of the figures are well executed and easily recognizable; and in some cases the eggs are also figured. It is to be regretted that Mr. Pycraft had not more space at his disposal, that he might have given at least a passing reference to some of the more interesting families not represented on the plates. Still he has done his best with his materials, and has given a good deal of general information, some of which may be new to many, if not most, of his readers. He feels very strongly on the subject of bird-destruction, and he never loses an opportunity of protesting against it—as, for instance, on p. 46, where we read of "the ghastly trophies which thoughtless women wear in their hats" (egret-feathers), and lower down on the same page, "There was a time when the Bittern was to be met with commonly in Great Britain, but drainage and that pest the 'collector' have done their work, so that at most but a few stragglers are now to be met with in our islands, and these are always promptly shot down." It is much to be regretted that it is still necessary to protest against the destruction of birds, ancient monuments, &c., even in England.

The book concludes with a good general Index.

Mr. Pycraft's book may be recommended to those who wish for an accurate and fairly comprehensive introduction to the study of birds.